

Rocky Mountain National Park

HIGH COUNTRY HEADLINES



Spring 2006

April 2 – June 17



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Main roads, facilities, and points of interest in this 265,000 acre national park.

Enjoying Spring

Springtime comes slowly and dramatically to Rocky Mountain National Park. Snowplows begin the month-long task of clearing Trail Ridge Road, elk calves hide among tall grasses and shady pines, Mountain Bluebirds return from their winter forays, hikers trade in their snowshoes for mud-covered boots, and vivid wildflowers add the first touches of color to the thawing meadows and hillsides. Below are a few suggestions for how to enjoy this time of awakening; where animals shake the snow from their backs and rangers shake the snow from the brims of their hats.

Driving

Bear Lake Road is open year-round, providing stunning views of high peaks and easy access to trailheads and two lakes (Sprague and Bear). Trail Ridge Road usually opens fully in late May, with deep snow drifts often visible throughout much of June. In Spring, it is always wise to check on Trail Ridge Road conditions before ascending, especially if the weather is anything but clear and sunny. Horseshoe Park and Moraine Park can be great places to drive through at this time of year.



Wildlife

Spring is an excellent time for viewing park wildlife. Elk calves and deer fawns are often spotted in Horseshoe Park, Kawuneeche Valley and Moraine Park in late May and June. Bighorn sheep are sometimes seen at Sheep Lakes. Migratory songbirds such as Mountain Bluebirds can be heard and seen in many places, such as the Cub Lake trail and Upper Beaver Meadows.

Hiking

The park's lowest, sunniest trails are good choices in early to mid-May. The Pool, Lily Lake, Deer Mountain, and Gem Lake are some good options. As this is a time of transition and melting snows, please check at a visitor center for current trail conditions.



Picnics and Family-Friendly Walks

Picnic tables are available in many park locations, including Hidden Valley, Endovalley, Moraine Park and along Bear Lake Road. Family-friendly walks include level trails around Sprague and Lily Lakes, as well as Coyote Valley and the Pool. Check at a visitor center for conditions at these locations, as some may hold snow through May.



Wildflowers

Burgeoning wildflowers herald that spring is creeping up into the mountains. Purple Pasque Flowers, yellow Golden Banner and small white Pussytoes are among the first blossoms to color the landscape. Grassy meadows, wet river banks and partially shaded areas offer a diversity of flowers for your enjoyment. Look for tiny but tough alpine wildflowers beginning in early June.



Swift
Water!



West Creek Falls ©Chris Kennedy

Rushing park waters are spectacular during spring runoff, but also very dangerous. Enjoy them at a distance—stay back from stream banks.

You Need to Know

Visitor Centers ?

Park visitor centers are the places to find out what you need to know. All have knowledgeable staff, printed information on many topics, and great bookstores stocked with the best books for finding that perfect trail and learning what makes Rocky Mountain such an outstanding national park. Each visitor center has its own special features.

Grand Lake Area

Kawuneeche Visitor Center

Open daily 8-4:30; starting May 14, open 8-5.

Features free movie and slide shows, exhibits on wonders of the park, a bookstore, and backcountry permits.



Estes Park Area

Beaver Meadows

Visitor Center

Open daily 8-5.

Features free movie, bookstore, large 3-D park orientation map, and backcountry permits in an adjacent building.



Sheep Lakes

Information Station

Starting May 20, open daily 8:30-4.

Good wildlife viewing area.



©Jack Dinsmoor

Fall River Visitor Center

Open weekends 9-4 through April 30. Starting May 1, open daily 9-5. Features life-sized wildlife displays, a children's discovery room with objects to touch, and a bookstore.



Alpine Visitor Center

Starting May 26, open daily (weather permitting) 10:30-4:30. Features extraordinary views of alpine tundra, tundra displays, bookstore, adjacent gift shop and snack bar. Call 586-1206 for daily information.



Moraine Park Museum

Open for the weekend of April 29-30. Open daily starting May 6, 9-4:30. Interactive exhibits on the past and present landscape, and a bookstore.



Weather and Road Conditions

Spring driving conditions can change rapidly. For current park road and driving conditions, call (970) 586-1206. After hours, a recorded message at (970) 586-1333 provides daily updates. *Trail Ridge Road is closed until Memorial Day weekend between Many Parks Curve and Colorado River Trailhead.* Starting May 26, the road is open as weather permits.



Pets



Pets are not allowed on park trails or in the backcountry. They are allowed in campgrounds, picnic areas and along roadsides. Please observe signs; some winter-closed gravel roads are managed as backcountry trails during this season. Pets must be on a leash (6' or less) and attended at all times. Never leave pets unattended in your vehicle or at your campsite.

Fishing



Obtain specific park regulations at visitor centers or park entrance stations. To fish in Rocky Mountain National Park, you must have a valid Colorado state fishing license.

No Firearms or Hunting

Hunting and weapons are not allowed in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Lost and Found

Please turn found items in at any park visitor center. To ask about lost items, call the Backcountry Office at (970) 586-1242.

Park Phone Numbers



Call Park Information (970) 586-1206 with your questions. We are available to assist you from 8 to 4:30 daily.



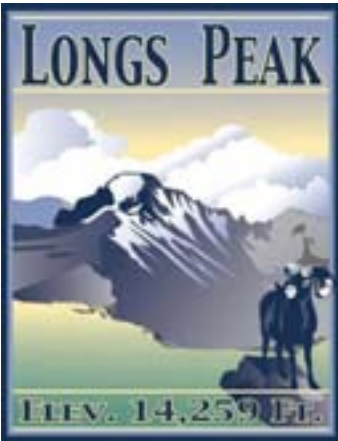
Dial 911 or (970) 586-1203 for emergencies.



Hearing impaired persons may call the TTY at (970) 586-1319 from 8 to 5.

Rocky Mountain Nature Association 75 th ANNIVERSARY

Seventy-five years ago, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) went into business as the park's non-profit partner. In 2006, the organization looks back on a long history of accomplishments.



·RMNA operates bookstores located in park visitor centers. Proceeds are returned to the park to help fund important educational and research programs.

·RMNA has raised more than \$10 million for 45 different projects in the park, like the Fall River Visitor Center, facilities at Lily Lake and trail improvements throughout the park.

·Land preservation efforts have protected 357 acres of park-sensitive lands.

As RMNA celebrates its 75 years of service, visitors to park bookstores will be greeted by t-shirts, mugs and tote bags bearing the official 2006 design, a beautiful artist's image of Longs Peak as seen from Trail Ridge.

High Country Survival

High Elevation

Nearly half of the visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park experience some symptoms of altitude sickness. These range from headache and dizziness to nausea and unconsciousness. Rocky Mountain has the highest average elevation of any national park; even the main road climbs higher than most U.S. mountains, to 12,183'! High altitude can also aggravate medical conditions such as heart and lung diseases. The only cure for altitude sickness is to **go down** to a lower elevation.



Lightning

People are killed by lightning every year in Colorado. Afternoon storms are frequent and can bring an unhappy end to a hike. Watch for approaching storms and be well below treeline or back to your car before the storm hits.



Swift Water

Mountain streams can be deadly dangerous, especially during high runoff in May and June. Even a narrow stream may be deceptively deep and fast, as well as cold. Remain back from the banks of streams and rivers, especially if you cannot see the bottom. Provide proper supervision for children who, by nature, tend to be attracted to water. Rocks at streamside and in the stream are often slippery, and water beneath them may be more than six feet deep. Powerful currents in park streams can quickly pull a person underwater and pin them below the surface.



Avalanches

When in snow-packed backcountry, avoid steep slopes and gullies where avalanches could occur. Open slopes of 30 to 45 degrees can be loaded with dangerous masses of snow, easily triggered by the presence of one or more backcountry travelers. Check at a park visitor center for current snow conditions, or call (970) 586-1206.



Keep Wildlife Wild

Never feed wildlife. A fine may be issued to violators. Animals can kick, bite, or gore you. They can become dependent on human food and lose the ability to feed naturally. Wildlife also carry diseases which can be transmitted to humans, like rabies and plague. Photograph animals from the roadside.



Hiking Tips

Stay Together!

The single most important factor in having a safe, enjoyable hike is to keep your group or family close together, and always within sight of each other.

Be prepared for all types of weather, no matter what activity you are enjoying in the national park. Unforeseen weather conditions can change a short afternoon hike into an unpleasant experience. Severe storms can impose life threatening hazards only one or two miles from your car. Carry a windproof/waterproof outer shell and extra layers of clothing, even though the weather does not appear menacing. Be equipped with detailed topographic maps and a compass.



Mountain Lions and Bears

Mountain lions and black bears are powerful and potentially dangerous. Some general guidelines for traveling in backcountry areas of Rocky Mountain where wildlife may be encountered:



- 1) **Travel in Groups** and make noise as you hike. Keep your group, especially children, close together.
- 2) **Do Not Approach** a mountain lion or bear.
- 3) **Stay Calm** when you see a mountain lion or bear.
- 4) **Stop**; back away slowly. Never turn your back and run.
- 5) **Stand Tall and Look Large**. Raise your arms. Protect small children by picking them up.
- 6) If attacked by a mountain lion or bear, **Fight Back!**

Dehydration and Safe Water

High altitude and the dry climate are both working to dry out your body right now. Carry and drink plenty of water as you hike or travel through the park. Avoid drinking untreated water from streams and lakes as it may be contaminated with giardia. Giardia can cause diarrhea, cramps, bloating, and weight loss. This microscopic organism enters surface water when animals or humans defecate in or near water. To prevent giardiasis, bring water to a full rolling boil for at least 5 minutes, or use a water filtration system that eliminates the organism.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a serious and sometimes fatal condition brought on by exposure to wet and cold. The core body temperature drops to a level which impairs normal muscle and brain activities. Symptoms include drowsiness, loss of judgment or coordination, slurred speech, and uncontrolled shivering. If these symptoms occur, warm the victim with dry clothing and warm, nonalcoholic liquids, get back to your car, and seek medical attention. Avoid these effects by carrying a windproof/waterproof outer shell and extra layers of clothing.



The park's high elevations, thin air, and wind all reduce the body's ability to stay warm.

Ranger-led Programs

Talks

Time/Program	Days Offered	Description
Ballad of the Bighorn Sheep 10:30 AM 30 minutes	daily starting May 20	Sheep Lakes is a popular viewing area for bighorn sheep. Meet at the Sheep Lakes kiosk, Horseshoe Park, to learn about this majestic symbol of Rocky.



Walks

Moraine Park Nature Walk 10 AM 1 hour	daily starting May 6	Enjoy an easy ¾-mile walk through the magnificent Moraine Park landscape. Meet at the Moraine Park Museum.
Spring Migration Bird Walk 8 AM 4 hours	May 13	Bring binoculars and a field guide for this ranger-led birding excursion. Meet at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. Call (970) 586-1206 for information.
Saturday Bird Walk 8 AM 1.5 hours	Every Saturday starting April 15	Join a local expert for birding at one of the best times of the year. Bring binoculars and a field guide and meet at Cub Lake Trailhead.



Cordilleran Flycatcher ©Peter Allen



Broad-tailed Hummingbird

Activity

Art in Paradise 2:30 PM 45-60 minutes	Thursday June 15	Glimpse this beautiful place through the eyes and creative works of an Artist-in-Residence—painters, musicians, writers, photographers. Meet at the Moraine Park Museum.
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Evening Programs

Beaver Meadows Evening Program 7 PM 1 hour	every Saturday	Enjoy a wide variety of informative and entertaining programs. Meet in the downstairs auditorium at Beaver Meadows Visitor Center.
Kawuneeche Visitor Center Evening Program 7 PM 1 hour	second Saturday each month	Enjoy an evening program the second Saturday of each month in the auditorium at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. For a description of topics, inquire at the front desk.



Wheelchair Accessible Programs

Junior Rangers



Free junior ranger books are available at park visitor centers for kids aged 6-12. A successfully completed book earns a badge!

Heart of the Rockies


Teachers, Parents, Students!
Rocky Mountain National Park’s “Heart of the Rockies” education program provides an outdoor classroom to children throughout this region. Teachers who are interested in participating in this program may contact the park’s Education Specialist at (970) 586-3777, or through the website at heartoftherockies.net



Free Park Movie

See the stunning new 23 minute park movie at the Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche Visitor Centers during normal business hours. This movie features spectacular aerial footage of the rugged high country of Rocky Mountain National Park, as well as wildlife and other park resources.

Park Bookstores



At RMNA Bookstores, Your Purchase Makes A Difference

A premier selection of Rocky Mountain National Park books, maps and other interesting items can be found right here at one of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) bookstores located in park visitor centers. And when you make a purchase from our non-profit organization, proceeds are returned to the park, supporting important educational, interpretive and research programs. Drop by today.




Visit the Rocky Mountain Nature Association bookstores at:
Beaver Meadows Visitor Center • Alpine Visitor Center
Moraine Park Museum • Fall River Visitor Center
Kawuneeche Visitor Center

Rocky Mountain Nature Association • P.O. Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517 • (970) 586-0108 • rmna.org

This Park Paper

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Camping

	Fee per night*	Reservations?	Dump Stations	Elevation (feet)	Stay Limit (nights)	Public Phones	Firewood, ice
*When the water is turned on for the summer.							
Aspenglen 54 campsites Open May 19	\$20	no	no	8,230	7	yes	yes
Glacier Basin 150 campsites Open May 24 	\$20	yes	yes	8,600	7	yes	yes
Glacier Basin Group Camping 14 campsites Open May 24 Tents Only	special fees	yes	n/a	8,600	7	yes	yes
Longs Peak 26 campsites Open all year—tents only	\$20	no	no	9,400	7	no	yes
Moraine Park 247 campsites Open all year 	\$20	yes	yes	8,150	7	yes	yes
Timber Creek 100 campsites Open all year	\$20	no	yes	8,900	7	yes	wood



Backcountry Camping Permits

Permits are required for all backcountry overnight camping. Camping is allowed only in designated sites and areas. Summer permits, after May 1 require a \$20 administrative fee. Permits may be obtained at the Beaver Meadows Backcountry Office or Kawuneeche Visitor Center. For further information write to: Backcountry Office, Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park, Colorado 80517 or phone (970) 586-1242.

Sprague Lake Accessible Backcountry Campsite

Reservations and information are available through the Backcountry Office at (970) 586-1242. This site accommodates 12 campers with a maximum of 5 wheelchair users at the camp. The administrative permit fee is \$20 from May 1 to October 31.



Campgrounds/Reservations

Two park campgrounds, Moraine Park and Glacier Basin, accept peak-season reservations (May 25 through mid-September). Call (800) 365-2267 to make national park camping reservations up to 5 months prior to your visit. Internet reservations can be made at <http://reservations.nps.gov>. Camping at the park's other campgrounds —Aspenglen, Longs Peak, and Timber Creek— is first come, first served.



©Phillipe Henry

Black Bear Country

Never approach a bear. Keep children beside you. There is more safety in numbers; it is best to travel in a close group. If a bear approaches you, stand up tall, and make loud noises—shout, clap hands, clang pots and pans. If attacked, fight back!

In campgrounds and picnic areas, if there is a food storage locker provided, use it. Avoid storing food and coolers in your vehicle. If you must, store food in airtight containers in the trunk or out of sight. Close vehicle windows completely. Do not store food in tents or pop-up campers in campgrounds, or in vehicles at trailheads. Food, coolers, and dirty cookware left unattended, even for a short time, are subject to confiscation by Park Rangers; citations may be issued. Dispose of garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters and trash cans. Human-fed bears usually end up as chronic problems and need to be removed - "A fed bear is a dead bear."

In the backcountry, store food, scented items and garbage in commercially available bear-resistant portable canisters, or carefully hang food 10 feet up and 4 feet out from a tree. Pack out all garbage. Never try to retrieve anything from a bear. Report all bear incidents to a Park Ranger.

Leave No Trace

With over 3 million visitors every year, the wild lands of Rocky Mountain National Park are heavily used.

In hiking, camping, and all your park activities, do your part to preserve this national treasure by following the seven easy Leave No Trace principles:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors



Hiking Trails

With over 350 miles of trails, the park offers a vast array of choices. A few of these trails are described below.

Many trails hold snow well into late June: please check at a visitor center for current conditions before hiking. Trails are listed starting with trailheads on the west side of the park, and proceeding eastward. Even for short day trips, be sure to pack gear for all types of weather (sun, rain, snow, wind). Windproof/ waterproof clothing is essential gear to wear or carry.



Lost Lake ©Chris Kennedy

Trail	Location	Round Trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Cool Stuff
West-side Trailheads				
Adams Falls	East Inlet, on the West Side, located on the far east end of Grand Lake.	.6 miles	80 feet	A beautiful short hike near Grand Lake. The trail continues beyond the falls to lush meadows.
Lone Pine Lake	East Inlet, on the West Side, located on the far east end of Grand Lake.	11 miles	1494 feet	A longer hike near Grand Lake to a high lake. The trail continues beyond to other lakes.
Cascade Falls	North Inlet Trail off Tunnel Road in Grand Lake	6.8 miles	300 feet	A relatively level walk to Cascade Falls.
Onahu Creek/Green Mountain Loop	Onahu Creek Trailhead or Green Mtn. Trailhead in Kawuneeche Valley	7.6 miles	1100 feet	Excellent loop trail through quiet forest and meadow, along flowing mountain creeks.
Granite Falls	Green Mountain Trailhead	10.4 miles	1046 feet	Quiet forest and flowing mountain waters await. A longer loop (13.6 miles) is possible, coming out on the Onahu Creek Trail.
Coyote Valley Trail	Coyote Valley on the West Side. On Highway 34, north of Kawuneeche Visitor Center.	1 mile 	10 feet	Follows the bank of the Colorado River, with views of the Never Summer Mountains. Look for moose, songbirds, and wildflowers.
Timber Lake	Timber Lake on the West Side.	10.6 miles	2060 feet	Strenuous hike to a beautiful backcountry lake.
Lulu City	Colorado River Trail, north of Timber Creek Campground	7.4 miles	350 feet	A gentle trail to an historic site. A longer return loop is via the Grand Ditch to Red Mountain Trail.
Little Yellowstone Canyon	Colorado River Trail, north of Timber Creek Campground	9 miles	990 feet	An extension of the Lulu City hike, deeper into park wilderness.
Red Mountain	Colorado River Trail, north of Timber Creek Campground	11 miles	2565 feet	A steep trail featuring some great views of mountains and valleys in the park.
Shadow Mountain Lookout	East side of Shadow Mountain Lake, just south of Grand Lake	9.4 miles	1533 feet	Strenuous hike to a lookout with spectacular views.
East Shore Trail	East side of Shadow Mountain Lake, just south of Grand Lake	5.2 miles	100 feet	2.6 miles to Green Ridge CG; a side loop trail to Ranger Meadows reconnects with main trail, adding 1.4 miles.
Central and East-side Trailheads				
Poudre River Trail	Poudre River Trailhead just northeast of Poudre Lake and Milner Pass on Trail Ridge Road	1-16 miles	up to 1000 feet	Gentle downstream walk through open meadows along the headwaters of a major river. Return walk is uphill.
Ute Trail	Across the road from Alpine Visitor Center, as well as other access points	1-8 miles	up to 1038 feet	Tremendous, open views above treeline; start and finish early before lightning and thunderstorms!
Toll Memorial	Rock Cut high on Trail Ridge Road	1 mile	260 feet	Beautiful displays of tundra flowers during mid-summer. Walk slowly, as this trail starts at 12,110’ elevation!
Deer Mountain	Deer Ridge Junction	6 miles	1083 feet	Great views of beautiful peaks and deep valleys as you hike to the top of a peak.



Shelf Lake ©Chris Kennedy

Trail Tips: Stay Together. This is the most important tip that comes from the hard experience of our search and rescue teams! Be prepared for the rigors of high elevation - drink plenty of water, and travel at a pace where you can still talk and breathe easily. If you feel poorly, descend to a lower elevation. Pack it in, pack it out- including remains of all your food (pits, peels, etc.), as well as facial tissues. Let nature's sounds prevail; avoid loud voices and noises. **No pets** are allowed on park trails.



©Chris Kennedy

Trail	Location	Round Trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Cool Stuff
Ute Trail - lower	Upper Beaver Meadows Trailhead	4.4 miles	955 feet	2.2 rugged, steep, quiet miles to the Ute Meadow backcountry site.
Nymph Lake	Bear Lake Trailhead	1 mile	225 feet	Beautiful views abound on an easy hike to a small lake.
Dream Lake	Bear Lake Trailhead	2.2 miles	425 feet	Excellent short hike to a very scenic backcountry lake.
Alberta Falls	Glacier Gorge Trailhead	1.6 miles	210 feet	Easy hike to a waterfall.
Mills Lake	Glacier Gorge Trailhead	5.6 miles	750 feet	One of the park’s most striking settings.
The Loch	Glacier Gorge Trailhead	6.8 miles	990 feet	A beautiful lake surrounded by tall peaks.
Cub Lake	Cub Lake on Cub Lake Road near Moraine Park Campground.	4.6 miles	540 feet	Meadows, aspen groves, ponds and conifer forests highlight this walk.
The Pool	Fern Lake Trailhead	3.4 miles	245 feet	An easy, shaded hike along a stream. Continues up to Fern and Odessa Lakes.
Spruce Lake	Fern Lake Trailhead	9.2 miles	1045 feet	A fine hike to another magnificent mountain lake.
Lily Lake	Lily Lake on Highway 7 south of Estes Park	.8 miles	20 feet	Wildflowers, waterfowl, and greenback trout may be seen on a level walk around the lake.
Estes Cone	Lily Lake Trailhead	7.4 miles	2369 feet	Great views are a reward of this strenuous hike to the top of a peak.
Twin Sisters	Lily Lake Trailhead	7.4 miles	2338 feet	A wonderful hike to a mountain top, for those seeking a vertical challenge.
Eugenia Mine	Lily Lake–this trailhead is south of the lake	8.4 miles	1323 feet	An alternative route to the abandoned Eugenia Mine site-see second hike below.
Chasm Lake	Longs Peak Trailhead	8.4 miles	2390 feet	A steep hike to a spectacular lake beneath the diamond of Longs Peak.
Eugenia Mine	Longs Peak Trailhead	2.8 miles	508 feet	An uphill hike to an abandoned mine site.
Sandbeach Lake	Wild Basin Ranger Station off Highway 7, south of Estes Park.	8.4 miles	1971 feet	A good early summer hike, as the first part is south-facing.
East Portal Loop	East Portal Trailhead at the end of CO Rt. 66	4.5 miles	500 feet	Park only at turn-around or in picnic area, both at end of the road. Several connecting trails along the way; read trail signs carefully.
<u>North Fork Trails:</u>	North Fork Trailhead on Retreat Road, 1 mile east of the town of Glen Haven. Trails start in Roosevelt National Forest and enter the park after 5 miles.			
Deserted Village	North Fork Trailhead	6 miles	200 feet	A quiet trailhead; this part of the trail is fairly easy as it follows the river.
Lost Falls	North Fork Trailhead	14.8 miles	1840 feet	A fine hike to a wild waterfall, for those seeking a lesser-used, rugged option
Lost Lake	North Fork Trailhead	19.4 miles	2750 feet	A long, steep hike or backpack to a splendid wilderness lake.

**Road Map
showing the
central portion of
Rocky Mountain
National Park and
all major park
roads.**



Free shuttle buses start on Friday, June 16th and will operate daily throughout the summer. Please check at visitor centers for schedules.

